

COOKING WITH WINTER SQUASH & PUMPKINS

MARY ANNA DUSABLON



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A Storey Country Wisdom Bulletin

Winter Squash & Pumpkins

Mary Anna DuSablon

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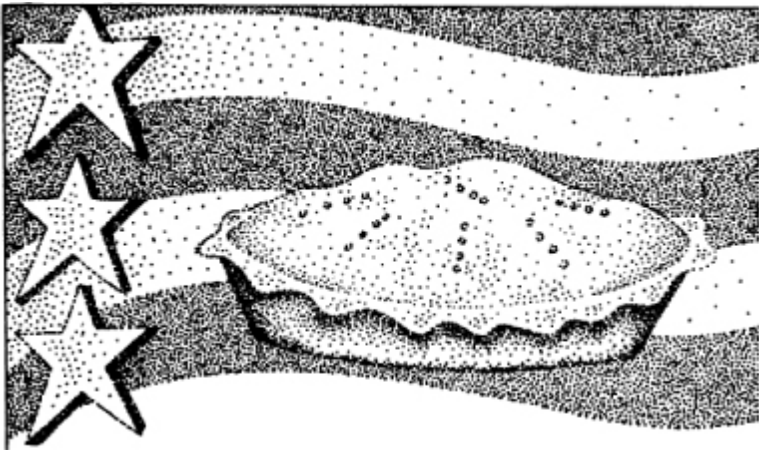
Introduction

Winter squash and pumpkins were cultivated in this country long before Columbus arrived. These easy-to-grow vines are probably native to Central America, although botanists are not really sure of their origins. Some species may have originated in Asia.

Whatever their origins, winter squash and pumpkins are truly an all-American food. What Thanksgiving table would be complete without a pumpkin pie? The very word *harvest* brings to mind images of bushel baskets piled high with butternut squash, fields of orange pumpkins, acorn squash sitting side by side on a basement shelf, and a glowing grin on a jack-o'-lantern.

Hard-shelled winter squash, gourds, and pumpkins were a staple in colonial America. Gourds, which are distinguished by their white rather than yellow or orange flowers, were once used to make spoons, ladles, bowls, bottles, and other kitchen tools. Today, luffa gourds make a popular bathing sponge.

Native American Indians probably taught the first colonists about these vine crops. The Indians baked squash whole in the ashes of their fire pits, or they simmered them slowly in stews flavored with squash blossoms. As they still are today, the large male blossoms of squash plants were considered a great delicacy.



“The American pie is perhaps the most ridiculed of all dishes. It has, however, great popularity and undoubted merits.”

Mary Ronalds, *The Century Cook Book*, 1896.

Winter squash and pumpkins are a good source of vitamin A. Squash and pumpkin flesh can be used as a poultice for burns and inflammations. One large glass of juice taken before breakfast is a reliable laxative.

The seeds, high in leucine, tyrosine, and the B complex vitamins, are reputed to be a cure for both roundworms and tapeworms. The seeds are slightly sedative in nature, and it is said that they also calm sexual excitement, which may or may not be an asset. Oddly, these same seeds can cause inebriation of ducks, who are very fond of them.

The leaves and blossoms are also edible. The *young* leaves can be cooked and eaten like any other green if you are looking for novelty. The blossoms should be eaten fresh. When choosing blossoms for any recipe, be sure to take the male flowers, that is, the flower with the longer stem. Leave the female to bear fruit. Squash and pumpkin flowers are delicately flavored.

Types of Squash

There is much confusion about the differences between winter squash, pumpkins, summer squash, and gourds. Botanists will tell us they are all *cucurbita*, members of the gourd family; but it is not quite that simple. In this country, we generally think of summer squash as those soft-fleshed, early-ripening varieties, such as zucchini and yellow squash. When we think of pumpkin, we generally mean the variety that is orange and carved on Halloween. Then we think of winter squash as those edible hard-shelled varieties that are harvested late and kept in root cellars for many months. Gourds are also hard-shelled, but the flesh inside dries out, leaving an inedible plant that is a useful container. To confuse things further, there are varieties, such as the cushaw, that some call a pumpkin, and some a squash.

Do not let names confuse you. In most recipes you can substitute a winter squash for a pumpkin and vice versa — if you add a tablespoon of common sense.

Here is a condensed guide to the many strains and hybrids of winter squash. All may be baked, boiled, steamed, frozen, canned, or dried, but special note has been made of some individual differences in these varieties.

Acorn. An acorn-shaped squash with a dark green rind and golden-yellow, sweet-flavored flesh. These squash are especially good for baking and stuffing. One squash will usually serve two people. Can be frozen in halves. For best flavor, use within a few months of harvest, before the flesh turns bright orange.

Banana. A very large squash with a long, cylindrical body and small seed cavity. Usually weighs around 10–35 pounds. Good keeper; thick flesh, fine-grained.

Buttercup. Averaging 3–4 pounds, this drum-shaped squash has a tough, green rind. It cooks extra dry, but its sweet potato flavor is good steamed or baked. Medium to medium-long storage life.

Butternut. Bottle-shaped or straight, this squash has a pinkish-tan hide and averages 2–4 pounds in weight. Its sweet, nutty flavor and fine texture make it good for pies. Good keeper but will get stringy eventually.

Butterbush. The bush-type butternut squash with reddish-orange

flesh and average weight of 1½ pounds. Good keeper; nice for baking and stuffing.

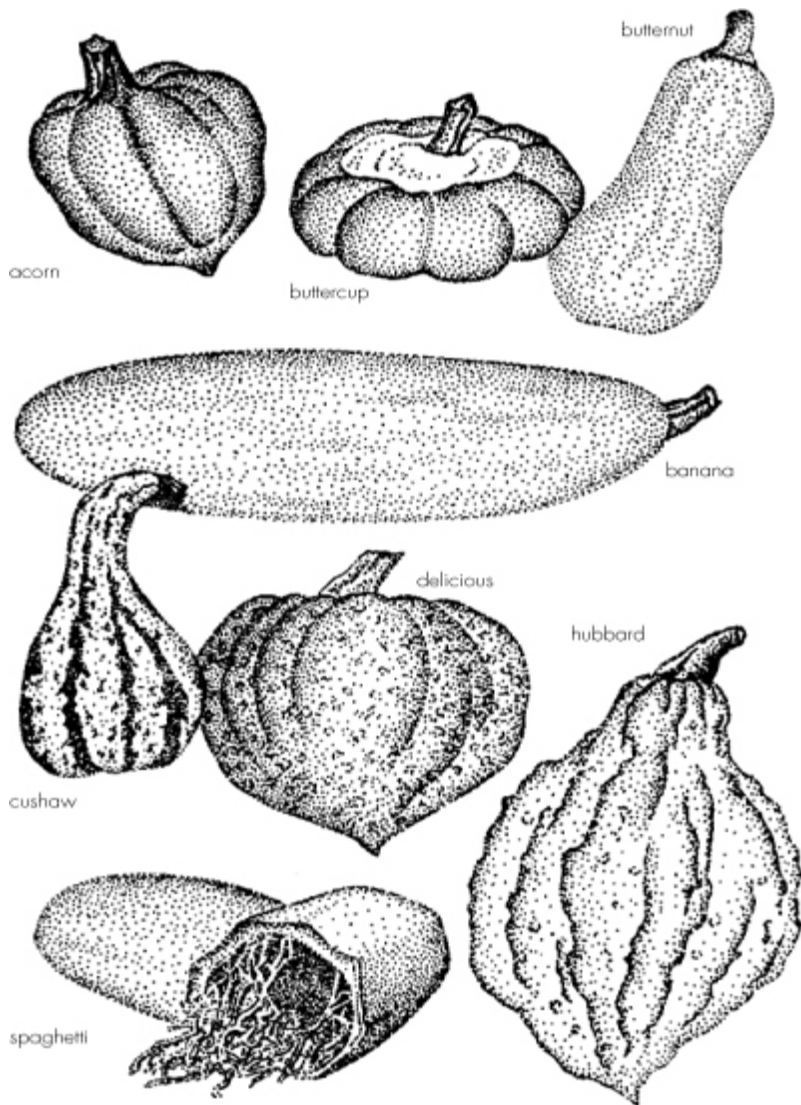
Cushaw. Crookneck or pear-shaped with a light buff or greenstriped rind. Cooks and tastes like squash, good for baking and boiling for mashing. Good for pies and canning.

Delicious. Round, yellow or dark green, heart-shaped squash with orange flesh. Good for canning and freezing. Higher in vitamin content than most winter squash; used for baby food.

Hubbard. Comes in green, gold, or blue varieties. With its hard shell, it keeps until spring. Large, nice for large families. Freezes, cans, and dries well. Excellent boiled for mashed squash dishes.

Spaghetti. Not really a winter squash, but it will keep well nonetheless. You can cook this novelty squash in boiling water and then substitute it in any recipe calling for spaghetti. This squash can be cooked and chilled for use in salads, too. Spaghetti squash is oval, with a cream-colored or tan rind and yellow spaghettilike texture inside.

Sweet Dumpling. Very small, sweet, delicious winter squash, weighing only about ½ pound apiece. Great baked, plain, or stuffed. Freeze halves.



Storage

A ripe squash is easily detected; if your thumbnail cannot penetrate the skin, it is mature. But check the color first. If you test an immature squash and you do penetrate the skin, that squash will not store as long. There is no hurry to harvest winter squash and pumpkins; they cannot over-ripen on the vine. Just pick the mature fruit sometime before the first frost.

When you harvest the fruit, leave a few inches of stem attached, and handle with care. Just because they are large and tough looking does not mean they are invulnerable to rough handling.

Winter squash and pumpkins must be cured before they can be put into storage. This will dry and harden their skins. Ideally, they should be left to cure in a warm, well-ventilated place for about ten days. Look for a spot, perhaps on a sunny porch, or by a woodstove where the temperature ranges between 75 and 85°F.

Harvesting Tips

Most of the winter squash or pumpkins on each plant should be ripe about the same time. Those you intend to store, harvest on a sunny day, after a few days of dry weather if possible.

Cut them off the vines leaving some stem on each. Roll them over and leave them outside for a few hours until the dirt and earthworms on the underside dry out and drop off.

Be careful not to bruise vegetables you want to store — they won't keep well, and they may spread fungus or rotting to other vegetables. Don't carry them by the stems; they won't support the weight.

You can wash winter squash and pumpkins with a bleach solution to kill bacteria on the skin. This helps them keep longer and better. Dilute a cup of Clorox in a gallon of water and sponge or dip the vegetables. Drip dry, and don't rinse them.

Dick and Jan Raymond, *The Gardens for All Book of Cucumbers, Melons, Squash*

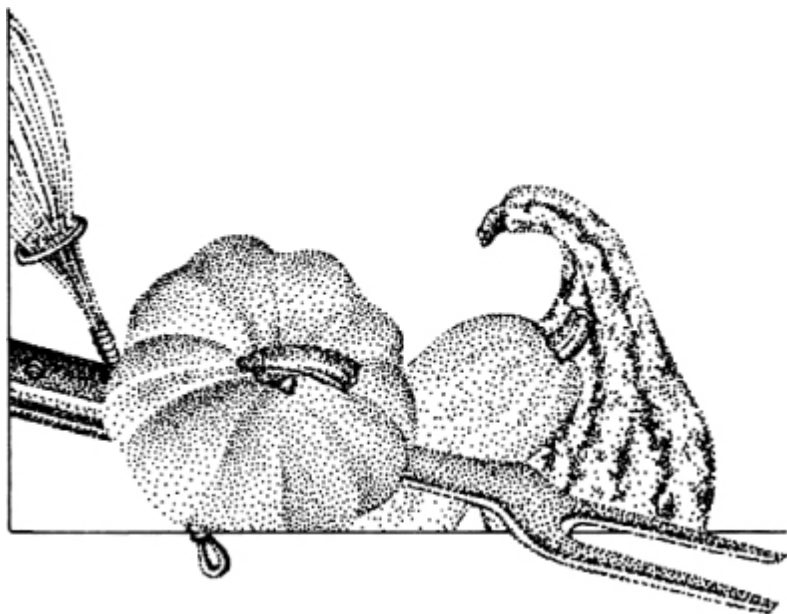
Ideal storage conditions for these vegetables is in a cool, dry place, approximately 50°F., 50–70 percent humidity, with moderate

air circulation. A basement or an attic with a fan might be just the thing. They should be set securely on shelves, not touching each other.

Outside storage might run the risk of freezing your vegetables, and inside the home where temperatures run above 55°F. will cause them to get stringy. Even under the best conditions pumpkins and winter squash will not stay perfect forever. Eventually the starch content will turn to sugar and the water content will increase. For this reason some people freeze, dry, can, or pickle some pumpkin or squash to use during the late winter months.

Cooking with Winter Squash and Pumpkins

All preparations for using winter squash and pumpkins — cooking them fresh, preserving them, or using preserved squash and pumpkin in recipes — are variations on a few simple processes — baking, boiling, and steaming. Once you are familiar with these techniques you are on your way to becoming a master chef around these tasty vegetables.



Baking

To get a crusty top on your squash, cut in halves or pieces, remove seeds and fibers. Place the squash flesh side up on an oven rack or baking sheet and bake for 20–60 minutes at 350°F. until fork tender. The time will vary depending on the size of the squash. Brush with butter and seasonings before or during baking, if desired.

To get a soft top, cut in halves, remove seeds and fibers. Brush with butter seasonings and place face down on baking sheet. Or wrap each piece in aluminum foil. Bake 20–60 minutes at 350°F.

until fork tender. Baking a whole squash might result in the squash exploding in the oven.

Boiling

Place halved or cut-up and seeded squash in boiling water. Boil for 15–30 minutes or until fork tender, depending on the size of the squash. Do not overcook.

Steaming

This method is best for retaining nutrients. Place halved or cut-up and seeded squash in the top of a boiler or blancher. Cover and cook for 20–40 minutes, or until fork tender.

Puree

After you have baked, boiled, or steamed your squash or pumpkin, you can puree it to use in many recipes. Simply remove flesh from rind and put through strainer or food mill. Some food mills, such as the Squeezo, have special large-hole screens that make the job of straining the flesh go quickly.

Preserving

Winter squash and pumpkins must be fully cooked before they can be frozen or canned. You can preserve squash and pumpkin in cubes.

Freezing

Remove seeds and fibers, peel if desired. Cut up and bake, pressure-cook, steam, or boil until tender. Remove the flesh from the shell, then mash hot or dice. Cool quickly. Pack in appropriate containers, leaving ½-inch head space. Thaw before using, except in slow-cooking soups and stews.

Canning

Pumpkins and squash should have a hard rind and stringless, mature pulp of ideal quality for cooking fresh from the garden. Smaller sized pumpkins will give you better results.

Remove seeds and fibers and peel. Cut in 1-inch cubes, cover with water, and bring to boil. Remove cubes from water, reserving cooking water, and pack hot. Fill hot sterile jars with hot cubes, leaving a ½ inch of head space, adding ½ teaspoon of salt to pints, 1 teaspoon of salt to quarts. Add cooking water that has once again been brought to a boil, leaving ½ inch of head space. Adjust lids. Pressure-process at 10 pounds (240°F.), pints for 55 minutes, quarts for 90 minutes.

Substitute home-canned or frozen squash in any recipe calling for squash pulp.

Caution: the USDA considers it **unsafe** to can mashed or pureed winter squash or pumpkins.

Drying

Take the vegetable directly from the garden, wash, and peel. Remove seeds and fibers, then slice or shred it. Steam for about 5

minutes, then dry at 140°F. until the pieces are tough or brittle. In a dehydrator this should take from 10 to 15 hours; in an oven at 140°F., it should take about 5 hours. When dry, allow the vegetables to cool to room temperature on the trays or oven sheets. Store in tightly sealed plastic bags or glass jars.

When you want to use these dried vegetables in a recipe, simply drop the pieces into boiling water to rehydrate. Then use in your recipe as you would fresh. For best results, use dried vegetables in soups and stews and just toss the dry pieces in the stock or gravy.

PICKLED PUMPKIN PIECES

No harvest kitchen is complete without a colorful shelf of pickles and relishes. Instead of canning or freezing all your extra pumpkin, why not try pumpkin pickles for a change?

- 1 large pumpkin**
- 2 cups vinegar**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 4 pieces stick cinnamon**
- 8 whole cloves**
- 4 whole allspice berries**

Wash, cut, and peel pumpkin, discard seeds and fibers. Cut flesh into chunks no larger than 1-inch. Place in a colander and set over a pan of boiling water; cover and steam until tender. Do not let pumpkin chunks touch the water or they will become mushy.

While the pumpkin is steaming, combine vinegar, sugar, and spices in a pot, bring to a boil; then simmer for 15 minutes. Drain pumpkin chunks when ready, place them in the simmering syrup, and simmer for about 5 minutes. Turn off heat and let stand in a cool place 24 hours. Bring back to heat, then simmer for another 5 minutes, removing spices as you find them.

Pack boiling hot in sterilized jars; process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath.

YIELD: 3 PINTS.

PUMPKIN CONSERVE

- 3 cups cooked pumpkin puree**
- 1½ cups pitted and dried apricots, chopped**
- 1½ cups raisins**
- 2 cups brown sugar, packed**
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon peel**
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice**

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan and cook over low heat for 1 hour, stirring frequently. This recipe is for immediate use. Do not can or store in sealed containers.

YIELD: 4 PINTS.

Cooking Tips

The tough skin of the winter squash and pumpkin is always removed before, or discarded after, cooking. And although the seeds are edible, they and the stringy pith in the center are also removed when preserving or preparing this vegetable for the table.

I've checked around and there does not seem to be a specific utensil for scraping the seeds and fibers from squash and pumpkin, but the best tool I have found is a serrated grapefruit spoon. It can also be used to scrape the cooked flesh from the shell of squash when you are preparing them for stuffing. Peeling is difficult but it is possible using a parer or sharp knife or both. For some recipes it is worth the trouble, saving time and energy in the long run.

As with all vegetables, winter squash and pumpkins should not be overcooked or drowned in boiling water since this will result in the loss of both nutrients and flavor. Most people bake, broil, pressure cook, or steam them before using in a recipe, but squash can be peeled and cut up for cooking in a small amount of water or broth.

One way to efficiently cook winter squash is to think ahead and stick a few in the oven with a casserole, or in a pot of soup or pan of boiling potatoes for use later in the week. These halved or cut-up pieces can then be cooled and stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator until you are ready for them. If squash are cooked with other vegetables or on a pan underneath a dripping fruit pie, they will pick up some of the flavors, and this can definitely be a step toward a tastier meal.

After you acquire some experience cooking with squash and pumpkins, the knack of estimating how many cups of mashed pulp per vegetable will get easier. For the time being it is safe to estimate that you will get approximately 1 cup of pulp to each 1 pound of vegetable.

Seeds should be dried or roasted for storage. There is a variety of squash with hull-less seeds, but the majority should be hulled before eating.

The type of pumpkin or squash you use and the age of the fruit will alter the taste of the dish you are preparing. As you season, you will want to taste often and let your palate be your guide.

All “pumpkin pie spices” go well with pumpkin and squash, together or individual: cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, allspice, mace, and clove. “Poultry seasonings” will blend as well: thyme, parsley, sage, rosemary, marjoram, black pepper, and nutmeg. Other suggestions for seasoning squash and pumpkin are orange peel, nuts, raisins, cranberries, apples, dried fruit, wine, Tellichery pepper, and all sweeteners, including honey and maple syrup. Tellichery pepper, a favorite of mine, is a delicious pepper from the highlands of South India. Look for it in gourmet shops and online.

Glazes are a perfect way of “finishing” a baked squash dish.

HONEY GLAZE

Put cooked and cut-up or mashed squash into an oiled, ovenproof dish. Bring to a boil: ½ cup of honey, 2 tablespoons of butter, 2 tablespoons of water or fruit juice and a little salt. Pour over squash and bake at 350°F. for about 20 minutes.

EGG GLAZE

Pile cooked and mashed squash into an oiled, ovenproof bowl. Brush with a mixture of beaten egg yolk and water. Sprinkle with paprika, then bake at 400°F. for about 10 minutes.

Preparing Seeds

Remove seeds from fibers by hand or with a fine spray of water. This can sometimes be a tedious job but well worth the effort in taste and nutrition. Spread the seeds on paper towels until dry. Pumpkin seeds will dry in a few days, if the weather is not too humid. Hullless seeds may be eaten as is; seeds with tough hulls can be shelled, just like nuts, for the kernel inside.

To roast seeds, put about 1 tablespoon of oil in a bowl and add seeds, toss until lightly coated. Lay on a baking sheet and place in oven at 350°F. for a few minutes. Salt lightly if desired and cool on paper towels.

To fry seeds, put about 1 tablespoon of oil in a skillet, add seeds.

Turn heat to medium-high and as seeds begin to “pop,” keep a lid handy and shake skillet just as you would if you were making popcorn. When the seeds swell, remove from heat. Salt lightly if desired and cool on paper towels.

Hull-less seeds or kernels, whole or ground, may be added to poultry dressing, salads, muffins — almost any recipe calling for nuts.

If you are growing your own pumpkins, you will find the Triple Treat variety has hull-less seeds. It also has delicious flesh and is a long keeper. Lady Godiva has hull-less seeds also, but the flesh is not recommended for table use.



Main Dish Recipes

Pumpkins and squash can form the basis of some colorful and hearty meals.

SQUASH WITH SAUSAGE STUFFING

Choose the traditional pork sausage, or try something new, such as German sausage, mild Italian sausage, or the Greek sausage flavored with wine and orange peel.

- 2 large or 4 small squash**
- 1–2 pounds sausage**
- 4 tablespoons oil or butter**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped onions**
- 1 cup dried bread or cracker crumbs**
- 2 eggs, well beaten**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated cheese**

Cut squash in half, remove seeds and fibers. If necessary, cut a slice off the bottom so that the shell will sit flat. Bake upside down in buttered baking dish for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour at 350°F. or until barely fork tender.

While squash is baking, precook sausage. Remove from casing if necessary and break up in skillet. Cook over low heat about 15 minutes. Drain. Add butter or oil and onions, and sauté another minute or two. Turn off heat and wait for squash to bake.

When the squash is tender, carefully remove cooked pulp from shell. Add to skillet, then add crumbs and egg. Stir well. Stuff shells, top with cheese. (We prefer Swiss with pork sausage, Parmesan with Italian, cheddar with German, and feta with Greek.) Bake another 15 minutes at 400°F.

Serve on a plate surrounded by some cooked, seasoned greens such as Swiss chard, spinach, or kale.

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR.

SQUASH WITH SHRIMP STUFFING

Fresh, frozen, or canned shrimp may be used, as long as it is cleaned and cooked. Of course, you may substitute crab or lobster; the better your seafood, the better your dish. Serve with cooked broccoli and hush puppies for a special meal.

- 2 large or 4 small squash**
- 6 tablespoons oil or butter**
- ½ cup diced celery**
- ½ cup chopped onion**
- 3–4 cups cooked shrimp or other shellfish**
- 1 cup dry bread or cracker crumbs**
- 1 cup milk**
- 1 egg, well beaten**
- ¼ cup sherry**
- ¼ teaspoon thyme**
- ¼ teaspoon garlic salt**
- salt and pepper**

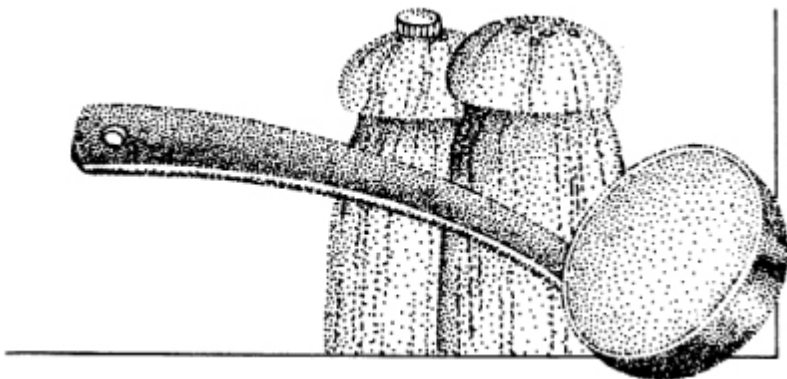
Cut squash in half, remove seeds and fibers. Cut a slice off the bottom of each piece so that it sits flat, and place upside down in buttered baking dish. Bake until barely fork tender, about ½ hour at 350°F.

Sauté celery and onions in oil, then add all other ingredients in order given, stirring after each addition and reserving some crumbs.

Pile into baked squash. Top with the reserved crumbs which have been tossed with a little more oil or melted butter, and bake at 400°F. for about 15 minutes more.

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR.



SPAGHETTI SQUASH POT MEAL

- 1 spaghetti squash water to cover**
- 1 pound lean ground beef**
- 4 tomatoes, quartered**
- 2 large onions, peeled and sliced thickly**
- 1 teaspoon basil**
- 1 teaspoon oregano**
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced**
- 1 can pitted black olives, drained salt**

Wash and halve squash, remove seeds and fibers. Place squash in a large pot, almost cover with water. Bring to a boil, then simmer until flesh is fork tender at largest part, about 15 minutes. Remove squash, boil squash water down until only about 1 quart remains. Turn off. Add ground beef, breaking it up as you put it in.

Using a potholder to hold squash, pull flesh from inside and add to pot, stirring with each addition. Discard skins. Stir in all other ingredients. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer about 30 minutes or until flavors are blended and meat is cooked.

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS.
TIME: 45 MINUTES.

SQUASH SOUFFLÉ

We have used both the acorn and butternut squash in this recipe with great results. This is a good recipe to use with home-canned or frozen squash.

3 (packed) cups cooked squash pulp, drained
1 tablespoon flour
4 eggs, separated
½ cup yogurt
¼ cup Swiss cheese, grated
1 teaspoon dried parsley
¼ teaspoon thyme
salt

Mash pulp, and if necessary, put through food mill processor until smooth. Place in a saucepan; beat in egg yolks and flour. Heat gently, stirring constantly, until mixture begins to set. Do not boil. Take off heat and stir in the yogurt, Swiss cheese, and seasonings.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Beat egg whites until stiff, but not dry, and fold into squash mixture. Pour into a well-buttered 2-quart soufflé or baking dish and bake about 1 hour.

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS.

TIME: 1 HOUR, AFTER SQUASH IS COOKED.

CHICKEN AND PUMPKIN WITH PUMPKIN SEED SAUCE

Making this exotic sauce is reason enough to save your pumpkin and squash seeds. This is an old American Indian recipe.

1 medium pumpkin
2 fryers, cut up
2 cups pumpkin seeds
2 cups fresh popcorn, popped
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon cumin
2 garlic cloves

2 cups water

Wash pumpkin, cut in half, seed, take out fibers, and peel. Prepare seeds for sauce by removing most fibers. If you have enough to make 2 cups, roasted or raw, it is nice; more seeds are really not necessary. Cut pumpkin into small chunks, about 1½ inches square.

Put seeds, popcorn, garlic, and water into blender and blend well for about 2 minutes. Add chili powder, cumin, and salt if desired, and blend again.

Spread all the chicken parts in a large roasting pan, including chopped up livers and gizzards. Cover with the sauce. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour, using the sauce as a baste. About ½ hour before serving, add the pumpkin chunks, sticking them between the chicken pieces wherever you can, and basting them, too. (If you are tired of squash, cut the pieces very small and after they have cooked in this fabulous sauce you will not remember what they were.) Serve with cooked spinach or a green salad.

YIELD: 6 SERVINGS.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1½ HOURS.

Soups

Cut up squash and pumpkin can be added to any homemade soup as a vegetable. If you add squash pulp to your soup, you will find it serves as a thickener.

Make a special soup even more of a treat by serving it in a pumpkin tureen.

PUMPKIN SOUP TUREEN

To make a real pumpkin tureen for your pumpkin or squash soup, choose a large pumpkin that sits flat or can be cut to sit flat without major surgery (which might cause it to leak). A bit of stem on the top is necessary. The size depends on how many servings you will be bringing to the table at one time; but do not get too carried away, you can always refill the tureen.

While your soup is simmering, wash the pumpkin well, and on top of the pumpkin draw a lid with the point of a sharp knife. Make the lid slightly larger than your ladle. Carefully cut the lid by inserting the knife *in and out, tapering toward the center*, so that the lid lifts out in one piece and is larger at its top. This way it will not fall in the soup.

Scrape the seeds and fibers out of the pumpkin, being careful not to pierce the flesh. Find a suitable round plate or tray to form the base of your tureen. You may warm the bowl of your tureen in the oven if you want to, just for a few minutes, but do not heat the lid or else it might shrink. When ready to serve, ladle your soup into the tureen, pop on the lid, and serve with a smile.



PUMPKIN SOUP

You can use corn chips to decorate this soup. Or serve it in the pumpkin tureen.

1 small pumpkin, about 3 pounds, or 3 cups cooked pumpkin pulp

2 tablespoons butter

½ cup finely chopped onion

4 cups chicken or vegetable stock

¼ teaspoon ginger

¼ teaspoon nutmeg

corn chips

black olives (optional)

To make pumpkin puree, preheat oven to 375°F. Wash pumpkin, cut in half, remove seeds and fibers. Place halves, cut side down on oven rack. Bake about 40 minutes or until flesh is fork tender. Cool slightly; scrape flesh from shell and puree in blender. You can use home-canned or frozen pumpkin.

In soup pot, melt butter and sauté onion until transparent. Add stock, spices, and pumpkin. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for about 10 minutes more. Serve with crushed corn chips on top. Or make a ring with the corn chips and use olive slices to make a jack-o'-lantern face on this rich, heavy soup.

YIELD: APPROXIMATELY 6 CUPS.

Time: about 1 hour.

Side Dishes

Early in the fall, when acorn squash is at its best, we cannot get enough of this versatile vegetable basted with butter and maple syrup. Buttercup or sweet dumpling are good for a change of pace, too.

BAKED SQUASH

Cut the small squash into quarters, the larger squash or pumpkins into more pieces. Slice the bottom rind free of any bumps so that the pieces sit flat. Remove seeds and fibers.

Each little “boat” will have a slight cavity for a dab of butter. As the butter melts it can be brushed over the whole piece (or you can just use melted butter to begin with). Each piece can also be brushed with 1 tablespoon of sweetener — brown sugar, honey, fruit juice, maple syrup, sorghum, or molasses.

Bake in an oiled baking dish at 350°F. for about 30 minutes, until fork tender. The squash may be baked at the same temperature you are cooking the rest of your meal, even right in the pan with your roast. Cooking time should be lengthened for temperatures under 350°F., shortened for temperatures higher.

FRIED PUMPKIN FLOWERS

15–20 blossoms, try different ones, some wilted, some open, some about to open

- ½ cup whole wheat flour**
- 1 tablespoon safflower oil salt**
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder**
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg**
- 1 cup beer**
- ½ cup milk**

Wash and dry flowers with paper towel. Blend the remaining ingredients to make batter, and beat until completely smooth. Place

a few tablespoons of oil in skillet, enough to coat. Heat oil but do not allow it to smoke. Dip flowers into batter a couple of times to cover, shaking off excess batter. Fry in hot oil turning only once, until crisp. Do not crowd skillet. Add more cooking oil if necessary.

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS AS APPETIZER OR SIDE DISH.

TIME: ABOUT 20 MINUTES.

STUFFED SQUASH

Squash should be halved for stuffing. Thinly slice any bumps off the bottoms so that the halves will sit flat. Whether you are baking your squash upright for a crusty finish or face down for a tender finish, brush with butter first, or allow a pat of butter to melt in the cavity. Salt lightly if desired; baste once or twice during baking.

As with squash pieces, halves may be baked at the temperature you are baking the rest of your meal, or at 350°F. for about 40 minutes. Lengthen the time for lower temperatures, shorten for higher temperatures. Bake in an oiled baking dish, in the pan with the roast, or right on the oven racks, upright.

When fork tender, fill cavity with your choice of filling.

Whole cranberry sauce, fresh or canned. Perfect with pork or poultry.

Applesauce, fresh or canned, is excellent with ham.

Other fruits, such as canned mandarin oranges and pineapple chunks, Bing cherries, or fruit cocktail, are mild tasting and good with many meals.

You can also remove the flesh from the shell, combine with the fruit and return to the shell. Fifteen minutes before serving, put squash mixture into a buttered oven dish, top with bread crumbs, and place into oven to reheat.

When stuffing a squash it is not necessary to complete the cooking of the flesh during the precooking stage. All that is necessary is that you can get most of the flesh out without tearing the shell.



FANCY STUFFED BUTTERNUT SQUASH

This stuffing is company fare when used as a surprise dressing in the cavity of a Cornish hen. Add about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dry bread crumbs to the ingredients in the bowl, then stuff hens lightly. Follow poultry directions for cooking dressed hens; this recipe will stuff 5 or 6 hens.

- 2 medium butternut squash**
- 1 cup dry wheat bread crumbs**
- 2 large cooking apples, peeled and diced**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup walnuts, chopped**
- 1 teaspoon sage**

Split the squash lengthwise, remove seeds and fibers. Rub with butter and bake, flesh side down, on a baking sheets for about 30 minutes.

While the squash are baking, mix all other ingredients in a bowl. When squash have baked, carefully scoop out flesh along with butter and juices, adding to the other ingredients in the bowl. Chop pulp up somewhat and add some salt and freshly ground pepper. Pile mixture into shells, dot with butter, and bake 30 minutes at 350°F. If tops become too browned, cover loosely with aluminum foil.

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR.

FANCY MASHED HUBBARD SQUASH

1 medium hubbard squash, or 4 cups home-canned or frozen hubbard squash

1 very ripe banana

1 egg, separated

¼ cup honey

salt

1 teaspoon honey, warmed

Bake or boil the squash until fork tender. Remove from shell and mash well. Add bananas, ¼ cup honey, the egg yolk, and a little salt. Beat until smooth. Pile squash in a greased ovenproof bowl (not a long casserole dish) almost all the way to the top of the bowl.

Beat the egg white with a pinch of salt until foamy. Gradually add the teaspoon of *warmed* honey to the egg white, beating until peaks form. With a spatula dipped in cold water, spread the meringue in peaks on top of the squash, bringing it all the way to the edges of the bowl. Bake at 350°F. for about 25 minutes or until meringue browns.

YIELD: APPROXIMATELY 8 SERVINGS.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 35 MINUTES AFTER SQUASH IS COOKED.

FRIED SQUASH

Surprisingly light, this recipe will appeal to people who never knew they liked squash.

½ cup whole wheat flour

1 tablespoon safflower oil

pinch of salt

¼ teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon nutmeg

1 cup beer

½ cup milk

1 small buttercup squash, peeled, seeded, and sliced $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick
oil for frying

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup catsup

3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

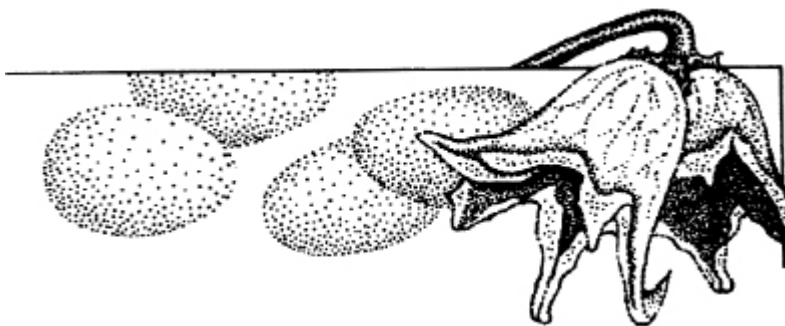
In a large bowl, combine flour, oil, salt, baking powder, nutmeg, beer, and milk. Beat until smooth.

Heat frying oil in a large skillet. Dip slices in the batter and place in hot skillet. The batter will not readily cling to the squash, but will give an irregular coating which is both unusual and tasty. Fry a little more than a minute on each side. Coating will get brown and crispy; squash will be cooked. Drain on paper towels.

In a cup or bowl, mix catsup and Worcestershire sauce. When squash slices have cooled somewhat, dip into sauce and eat.

YIELD: APPROXIMATELY 4 SERVINGS AS AN APPETIZER OR SIDE DISH.

TIME: ABOUT 20 MINUTES.



SQUASH FLOWERS AND EGGS

Since morning is a great time to gather a few flowers for utterly nutritious and good eating, chopping up a few to sauté for an omelet or whip into scrambled eggs is very sensible. Or just sauté them and place them alongside your sunny-side-up egg, add a few slices of ripened tomato, and nothing will go wrong all day.

SCALLOPED SQUASH

2 tablespoons oil
¼ cup onion, chopped
½ cup green tomatoes, chopped
1 teaspoon parsley
¼ teaspoon thyme
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
3 cups raw squash, peeled, seeded, and chopped
1 egg well beaten
½ cup ricotta cheese (or whipped cottage cheese)
buttered crumbs

Sauté the onion and green tomato in a large skillet for about 3 minutes, stirring frequently. Add parsley, thyme, and flour, and stir well. Cook for another minute or so. Add milk, and heat until somewhat thickened. Turn off heat and add all other ingredients in order given, stirring well after each addition. Pour into a greased casserole dish and bake, covered, for 30 minutes at 350°F. Uncover, top with buttered crumbs, and bake for another 15 minutes.

YIELD: 6 SERVINGS.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR.

Breads and Desserts

These recipes are sure to be family favorites — and they offer wonderful ways of using canned or frozen squash.

PUMPKIN ROLLS

- ½ cup warm water**
- 2 packages active dry yeast**
- ¼ cup lukewarm milk**
- ½ cup butter**
- 1 cup mashed, cooked pumpkin**
- 2 eggs**
- ½ cup honey**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- 1½ teaspoon salt**
- 5 cups freshly ground whole wheat pastry flour**
- ½ cup safflower oil**
- ½ cup honey**
- ½ pound pecan halves**

Warm the milk in a saucepan; remove from heat and add butter to soften. Measure warm water into mixing bowl; add yeast and stir until dissolved. Add milk, butter, pumpkin, eggs, honey, cinnamon, and salt, and beat lightly until smooth. Add flour, a little at a time, mixing well. When dough can be managed, turn out on lightly floured board. Knead until smooth. Let rise until double, about 1½ hours.

While dough is rising, prepare muffin tins by pouring 1 teaspoon oil into each hole, spreading it on sides and bottom. Add 1 teaspoon honey per hole (a plastic honey bear can be a good helper) and 2 pecan halves, broken up somewhat.

When dough has risen, punch down, and shape into balls the size of a walnut. Put three balls into each muffin hole, creating the old-fashioned cloverleaf roll. Cover and let rise for about another hour. Bake at 375°F. for 20–25 minutes.

YIELD: 24 ROLLS.
TIME: ABOUT 3½ HOURS.

PUMPKIN BREAD

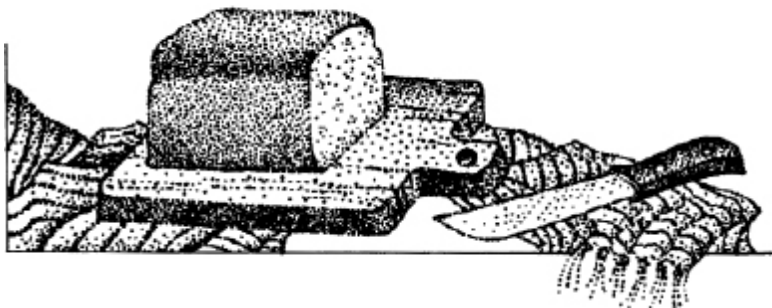
Delectable warm with melted butter or topped with cream cheese or apple butter when your sweet tooth needs a nibble.

- 1 medium pumpkin (3 cups pulp)**
- 1 cup safflower oil**
- 1 cup honey**
- 1 cup yogurt**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon cloves**
- 4 teaspoons baking soda**
- 4 cups whole wheat pastry flour**

If starting from scratch, cut pumpkin into halves, remove seeds and fibers and bake flesh side down on a buttered baking sheet for 30–45 minutes at 350°F., or until fork tender. Let cool for a few minutes. Put oil into blender. Using a towel to handle, scrape out hot pulp and put it into blender too, a cup at a time, and blend until smooth. You can substitute 3 cups of canned or frozen pumpkin if desired.

Spoon into a large mixing bowl, then add all other ingredients except flour, mixing very well. Add flour. Stir well, then taste batter. If it isn't sweet enough for you, add more honey. Spoon into 2 oiled 8½-inch by 4½-inch bread pans and bake at 325°F. for 1 hour. Cool in the pan for 15 minutes before removing to rack.

YIELD: 2 LOAVES.
TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1½ HOURS AFTER PUMPKIN IS COOKED.



HONEY CHIFFON PUMPKIN PIE

Nancy Zahour of Nancy's Honeybees (6016 Woodward Ave., Downers Grove, IL 60515) gave us permission to use this recipe. She says that it is best served the same day it is made. "Deliciously different for your holiday meals. A Blue Ribbon prizewinning recipe I know you will enjoy!"

Crust:

20 graham crackers (1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup soft butter

3 tablespoons honey

Crush crackers very fine. Blend honey with soft butter, then mix with cracker crumbs. Press into a heat-resistant, deep 10-inch pie dish. Bake 10 minutes at 375°F.

Filling:

1 tablespoon plain gelatin

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold water

3 eggs, separated

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup honey

2 cups cooked pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole milk

1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon ginger
½ teaspoon cloves
2 tablespoons honey

Soak gelatin in cold water for 5 minutes. Beat egg yolks, combine with honey, pumpkin, milk, salt, and spaces. Cook in double boiler until thick, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, add softened gelatin, and stir until dissolved.

Beat egg whites until frothy, add 2 tablespoons of honey gradually, and continue beating until whites stand in stiff peaks. Fold stiffened whites into pumpkin mixture gently but thoroughly. Turn into graham crust and chill several hours.

YIELD: 6 TO 8 GENEROUS SERVINGS.

TRADITIONAL PUMPKIN PIE

Pumpkins have always been an American staple food as illustrated in this anonymous early New England verse:

*For pottage, and puddings, and custards, and pies.
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies.
We have pumpkins at morning and pumpkins at noon;
If it were not for pumpkins, we should be undone.*

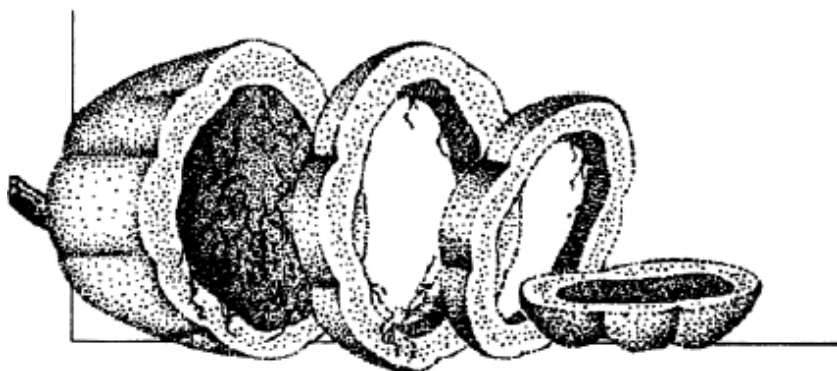
2 8-inch pastry shells, unbaked
2½ cups mashed cooked pumpkin (May be home-canned, frozen, or commercially prepared)
2 15-ounce cans condensed milk
4 eggs
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon ginger
¼ teaspoon cloves

1 cup brown sugar (more if desired)

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and beat until smooth. Pour into pastry-lined pie tins. Bake at 375°F. for 50–55 minutes, or just until a silver knife inserted 1 inch from the side of the filling comes out clean. The center may still look soft but will set as it cools. Serve at room temperature or cold — always with whipped cream.

YIELD: 2 8-INCH PIES.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR AFTER PUMPKIN IS COOKED.



SQUASH CORNBREAD

The best cornbread you will ever eat!

1 cup cooked squash puree

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup corn meal

1 egg, beaten

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen or fresh kernel corn

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil

To make fresh squash puree, peel squash, and boil in water to cover until soft. (Add a tablespoon of poultry seasonings and a few grinds of pepper to the cooking water if desired.) Puree cooked

(home-canned or frozen) squash in blender or food processor.

Beat egg lightly, then beat into the puree. Add the other ingredients and mix lightly. Pour thick batter into well-buttered cast iron skillet (8 inches across). Dot with butter, bake at 350°F. for 40 minutes.

YIELD: LOTS OF CORNBREAD FOR 4.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR.

SQUASH-OATMEAL COOKIES

¾ cup butter

¾ cup honey

1 cup grated raw winter squash

1 egg

2 cups whole wheat pastry flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1½ cups rolled oats

1 cup raisins

Allow butter to come to room temperature and mix well with honey. Beat in squash and egg. Add flour and baking powder, and mix well. Then add oats and raisins, and stir well again. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet and bake at 400°F. for about 12 minutes.

YIELD: ABOUT 50 COOKIES.

SQUASH OR PUMPKIN CAKE

You will receive many compliments when you serve this cake. Frost with your favorite recipe for coconut icing or spread on a mixture of ½ cup cream cheese, ¼ cup butter, and ½ cup honey.

4 eggs

1½ cups oil

1 cup honey

½ cup sugar

2 cups grated raw squash or pumpkin

2 cups whole wheat pastry flour or white flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1½ teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons cinnamon

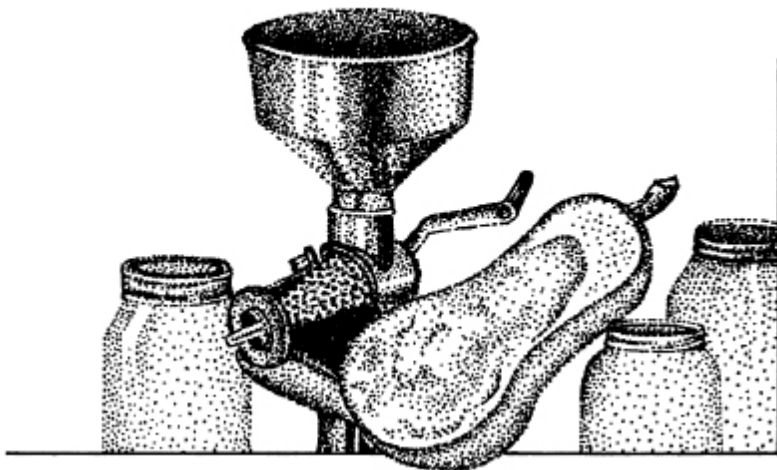
1 8-ounce can pineapple, well drained

½ cup nuts

Place eggs, oil, honey, and sugar in blender, in that order, and blend until smooth. Add the squash, a little at a time. Pour into a large mixing bowl, add all dry ingredients and stir well. Fold in nuts and pineapple. Pour into greased 9- by 13-inch pan. Bake at 350°F. for 35–40 minutes until done.

YIELD: 1 LARGE CAKE.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR.



SQUASH PIE

A New England favorite, making good use of the butternut-type squash. This pie is not sweetened as heavily as some pies since the topping is extra sweet.

1 9-inch pie crust, unbaked

2 cups cooked squash (home-canned or frozen)

2 cups milk

3 eggs

½ teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon ginger

½ teaspoon nutmeg

1 teaspoon salt

½ cup honey

½ cup whipping cream

¼ cup maple syrup

Make your favorite pie crust, fluting the edges up high.

Put 1 cup of milk in the blender and add the squash, a little at a time and blend until smooth. Add eggs and spices and blend. Place mixture in a large bowl and add the other cup of milk and the honey. Stir briskly until well blended.

Pour into unbaked pie crust and bake at 425°F. for 10 minutes, then at 325°F for about ½ hour. Cool to room temperature. When ready to serve, beat whipped cream until stiff, then drizzle the maple syrup into the cream, folding in. Swirl onto pie.

YIELD: 1 9-INCH PIE.

TIME: APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR AFTER SQUASH IS COOKED.

Bumper Crop

Some years your garden will yield a bumper crop of winter squash and pumpkins. Some squash will be fed to stock; there are squash grown explicitly for that purpose. Some people will make new dishes for the family, carve a few extra jack-o'-lanterns, or have tiny smiling "punkinfaces" sitting at each place setting for a harvest feast.

Some creative people will use the squash for soup bowls, the same way they use the pumpkin for a tureen, but without the lid. Both fruits will withstand some baking before filling with soup (even with the soup or stew in it) and some of the flesh can be carefully taken from the shell for the soup itself.

Attractive or unusual squash and pumpkins look very nice as bookends or just sitting in a corner of a shelf as a reminder of a productive summer. They will not last long at room temperature, however, so check occasionally.

The American Indians used both dried squash and pumpkin shells for utensils, just as they did gourds. One of the prime uses for a great big pumpkin shell with lid was storing grains and seeds.

The taste of winter squashes and pumpkins is almost always welcome, but if the time comes that you simply cannot work up an appetite, and you counted two *more* left than there were yesterday — remember, you can still use them sparingly in soups, stews, breads, and curries where they will take on other flavors or disappear into the broth altogether. When worse comes to worst, cheer up, it's probably getting close to spring anyhow.

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